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Moods and Tenses

Emeline Daggett Harvey

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Moods and Tenses

By
Emeline Daggett Harvey

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EMELINE DAGGETT HARVEY

Moods and Tenses

A WORLD'S PROTEST

Albion, you were wont to be merry!
France, you were smiling and fair!
Italy, laughing and gladsome
Like a maid combing her hair
For the fond eyes of her lover,
For the sweet friends of her youth.
Gone, all gone is the gladness!
Naught but red havoc! No ruth

In the grim hate of the bullet;
In the sharp flashing of steel;
In the red belching of cannon;
In battle's thunderous peal.
Ruthless the strong hand of warrior;
Purposeful leader and led.
Where rings the war cry of victory
There doth the rivers turn red!

Thrones and republics, truth's standards,
God's given promise to man
Through a Christ martyred on Calvary
Fall under war's ruthless ban.
Home, church and state led and captive
By the strongwilled lust of power,
Palace and hut, tent and prison,
Fall in the whim of the hour!

Tears dried in eyes flashing vengeance;
Blasphemous lips drawn and stained
With the spewed froth of the death-grip,
All battle's purpose ungained.
War with its bloodred torrents,
Strife with its earth-filled groans,—
The world is sick of the tumult,
The crunching of dead men's bones!

LIFE'S WINDOWS

I stood at Life's east window
To see the bright sun rise;
With awe looking out on wonderland
From half-opened, wondering eyes.
Anon my glance grew bolder
As the sun rose high o'er head,
I, proud as the bird in his rock-bound nest,
Forth from my window sped.

I stand in Life's south window,
In the glare of full-orbed day;
Mine eyes are bold to watch the rest
Toil over the rugged way.
And the sun mounts higher and higher
As the days rush scurrying by;
Mid the dust of march, though travel-stained,
I can yet look up to the sky.

And on to the end of Life's day-time,
Though weary and sometimes faint,
I shall press ahead in the journey
Without murmur or complaint.
For I know that at last comes the evening
When the day is folded by,
I shall stand at Life's west window
And look out upon the sky.

DIP DEEP

Dip deep, ye winds on the crests of a shoreless sea,
Dip deep mid the waves of a turbulent memory,
Dip deep your oars, oh breezes filtering clear
All life's ocean-depths that wash and break so near!

Dip deep, ye winds that fan my burning cheek,
Dip quick, for ye may not know how swift Time's flight.
Surge back and forth in your elf-like, wanton glee,
Guiding your unseen sails o'er rough seas glinting white.

DIP DEEP

Like a ship with viewless prow that cuts the hissing waves,
Its shivering, cloud-kissed masts of spectre boat unseen,
In the shimmering track of a bark with sweet, medicinal breath
Those phantom doubts doth juggle the joyous hope between.

Dear hope, with her bright prow pointing towards the impossible shore!
Sweet sailor, coming and going but doomed forevermore,
She flits upon my vision only to sink to sleep
Neath the billows of oblivion full forty fathoms deep.

LAKE MICHIGAN IN A STORM

1

Open your stable doors high and wide,
To Michigan's milk-white, racing steed,
Flinging his heels at the storm racked tide,
Perfect of form, and thorough of breed!

2

His starbright eyes are aglint with fire;
His screaming lips are adrip with foam;
His white teeth snap with impatient ire
As he rides the crests of his watery home.

3

Dainty ears list for the glad, mad call
Of the beckoning surge coming in from the sea;
Strong heart aquiver in answering all
The myriad voices of comrades to be.

4

Mane and tail lash the beating winds;
His proud feet pound on the hoof-scarred shore;
He flings the spray from his shining sides
And gallops back to his home once more.

WATCHING

I wonder when my ship will come,
  Or when she will heave in sight.
I'm weary o' watching the long, long day.
  I'm weary o' watching the night.
I'm weary o' watching the glistening skies
  That glint far down to the lea.
O, my heart is weary o' waiting
  For my ship to come back to me!

My ship went over the flashin' waves
  With a kingdom's price on deck.
There was laugh and jest from the sailor braves
  At my fears o' a comin' wreck,
For with womanish trust I gave to her
  My wealth o' silver and gold,
My precious gems and milk-white pearls,
  An' diamonds o' wealth untold.

Among the gems on that dancin' ship
  Was one wi' a blood-red heart.
It lay in its shinin' velvet case,
  A wondrous work o' art.
I did not think, I could send it out
  On the tossin' treacherous deep.
O, I cannot patient wait for my ship!
  I cannot rest, nor sleep.

All day I watch yon glistenin' tide—
  All day till the sun doth dip,
My keen eye measures the skirlin' waves
  In search of the absent ship.
From break o' day till set o' sun
  I traverse the burnin' sands
With whirlin' brain and achin' heart
  And longin' empty hands.

WATCHING

Ah, me! I have no heart to dress
  Myself in costly plaid;
I care no more to plait my hair
  In mony an ebon braid;
The laces rare an' costly I
  Shall no more don in pride,
Until my absent ship brings back
  My crown-gem o'er the tide!

JUNE 1921

1

June morn, and sunlit skies, and greenbright trees
With soughing winds astir among their leaves
All tender-hued and bird-filled with glad song,
A beckoning me with promise of reprieves.

2

High noon, and June-day rest, and folded arms,
And cooling brows, and slowing pulse, and heart
Athrob with big ambition's swelling force,—
In the great scheme of things a glorious part.

3

June eventide and moonlit calm, and hush, and rest,
And nature's whispering voices to a world
Of folded wings o'er mothered broods close-prest.
And patient, silent stars—a flag unfurled.

4

Midnight, and luring calm,—and dense, dark hush
Of silence deep, profound. Earth's bated sighs
Come soft like falling rose-leaves from bent bush,
Or dropping dews from low-hung tender skies.

SWEET WILLIAMS

What is more welcome now among the flowers
Than those old friends, Sweet Williams, than which
Earth has no sweeter, none that has more power
To scatter glowing sunshine warm and rich?

They are so steadfast in these lavish times
Of stately palms and lofty, reaching trees;
Of gorgeous blooms from every sunny clime;
Of trailing vines from over tropic seas!

All through past years of vain forgetfulness,
When gaudier flowers were flaunting newer arts
To charm from their old love Sweet William's friends.
Sweet Williams smiled the same with patient hearts.

Now, after three decades they come again
In all their old-time beauty, pink and white,
In crimson, red, mixed light and dark,
Chiefest of all the flowers in Lincoln Park.

AUTUMN IN MELMORE, OCTOBER 1920

Oh, the bright days of October!
Restful days of Autumn glory.
Oh, the brilliant hues and tintings!
Theme for song and plot for story.
Hill and dale, ravine and valley,
Limpid brook with soft, sweet purling.
Treetops all ablaze with splendor
Of the autumn tints unfurling.

Flag of heaven in all its treasures
Of blue sky and soft winds stealing,
Giving health in willful measure,
Nature's throbbing heart revealing.
Land of harvests—giant grainings!
Land of effort, land of toilings!

AUTUMN IN MELMORE, OCTOBER 1920

Land of brave hearts uncomplaining!
Land of strong hands calloused moilings!

Neighbor like himself considered
In the income, in the outgo—
In the o'er-full days of labor
He shrinks least who strikes the last blow.

Gardens pathless from their fullness,
Appletrees still dropping, dropping—
Can I find a path beneath them,
Showers of fruit my footsteps stopping?

Flocks of sheep the hillside grazing,
Cows in slow contentment feeding,
Horses shining, sleek and forceful,
All the past months toil unheeding.

Star-eyed Prince, I said you'd know me!
Time and circumstance could never
Change your loyal heart's allegiance
To your friends though miles may sever.

Oh, the pleasant drives you gave me,
Bonny Prince the smooth road skimming!
Fleet of foot the earth scarce touching;
Race and contest always winning.

A LULLABY

Dropping, dropping, dropping, all through the starless night,
Like the tinkling of music made by a perfect hand
Not mortal in its perfectness; too soothing sweet to be earth-born;
Sweeping over the heart-strings at the artist's command.

Dropping, dropping, dropping, and pattering on the housetops,
Falling softly and gently, as though conscious of our pain;
Whispering words of comfort, then sinking away to a murmur;
Oh, how gladly I list to the rhythmic beat of the rain;

A LULLABY

Never a false note struck by the artist, all perfection,
Never a note discordant to the most practiced ear,
Never a meaning mistaken to the enchanted listener,
As it rings like a song that is born of a smile and dies in a tear.

Now bursts the storm in grandeur, as wave on wave descending,
Sweeps o'er the earth in torrents falling with roar and dash,
Seeming glad of a victory over the heat of the noonday,
Dashing its rifts in the face of the vanquished foe with a crash.

Red and hot glows the lightning; loud peals the jubilant thunder,—
Nature's joymad symphony coming to us heart-deep.
Earth, Mother Earth sweet smiling, rocks us to sleep on her bosom,
Forgetting, naught else regretting, we sink in a dreamless-sleep.

ARISEN

In Memory of Eugene Field

They tell me he is dead, our poet-friend,
They whisper—He once lived: This is the end
Of his endeavor; this the round climax of his o'er-full life,—
These silent hands, these patient lips, this laureled brow,
After the pain and strife!''

Voices whose brave words place a seal upon our lips
In life's perplexities, now rise o'er the deeps
Of our affliction, and with kind and tender love
In soothing accents whisper, ''Hush, he sleeps!
List to the harps above!''
Friendship, and love, and home, and tender ties
Folded away in that great soul of truth so sweet!

ARISEN
In Memory of Eugene Field

What matters if familiar walks grow rank and dense,
If streets of gold are ringing 'neath his boyish feet?—
His the recompense.

What matters it if as our hearts roll sadly back
The idle plaint,—'What shall we cling to in this earthly lot?'
Ours, now the great example; ours the uplifted torch;
Ours the emblazoned words,—rare gold of poet-thought.
His, the well-won goal.

What matters it if yesterday the sad bells tolled,
The slow procession filed adown the silent paths—
Today ten thousand voices sing his songs
Through loving smiles and tears. Oh, tender aftermath!
Hark! Hear them sing!

Nor death, nor slumber holds our poet-friend in thrall.
Up to the jasper gates his boyish feet have striven.
Death's bonds are rent in twain; sleep's chains obedient fall!
We will rejoice; we will be glad and sing,
He has arisen!

THE SAILOR'S DEFIANCE

Blow, Blow winter winds, shrieking round
My home like a demon of wrath!
Blow, blow angry winds, ye are beaten
And driven in shame from my path!
Howl, howl winter winds! care I naught
For your anger, your snarling and strife!
Ye may blow, ye may howl, what care I
When I sit with my children and wife!

Wail, wail winter winds! Safe in port,
The long, tedious journey is past.
Though the ocean is dear to my heart
Yet I'm glad to reach home at last,
I thought when off old Fundy Bay
With a gale blowing mad from the west.

THE SAILOR'S DEFIANCE

And the caps breaking high o'er our decks,—
I thought we would sink, do our best!

"Make ready the life-boat, we're lost!"
Shouts the Pilot. The old captain smiled—
"Man, man have ye nothing at home?
"Have you nothing to meet, wife nor child?"
"Then, work for the sake of the wife,
"And work for the sake of the child
"And bend not your heads to the storm
"Blow it never so fiercely and wild!"

Every man cheered the old captain then
As we ploughed through the billows of foam
And we worked with a will for his sake,
And for love of the dear ones at home.
Oh the ocean is pleasure's rowboat,
And a storm 'mong the breakers is grand!
But for happiness give me my friends,
And my bright, peaceful hearth-side on land.

TO THE COTTONWOOD

Oh brave old tree! Oh grand old tree!
I wonder what you sing for me.
Your rustling leaves like myriad feet
Soft tripping through the silent street,
Or flocks of whitewinged Cherubim
A-pattering out their evening hymn
With soft, white finger-tips so sweet—
"Swish-sh-sh!" the sounds repeat.

A lull—the zephyr poises still.
I, waiting hold each sense in thrill,
And ask, from whence come all those sighs?
Whence all those countless sweet replies
To countless questions, eerie, low,
That fall as soft as flakes of snow?
What is the burden of your song?
"Swish-sh-sh!" you whisper all night long.

TO THE COTTONWOOD

I hear a many-throated choir,
And tinkling bells from many a spire
Of Nature's vast, green, leaf-clad grove.
I hear the woody sounds I love,
And brooklets babbling with delight
Go softly rippling day and night,
Purling their restful melody,
Bring back voices sweet to me.

Refreshing sounds delight anew
As of a fountain dripping dew;
Now rise in elfish ecstasy,
Now sink in murmers of the sea.
A million tiny streams doth fall.
So soft their notes like sweet bird call,
That every sense is lulled to rest
On Mother Nature's tender breast.

You hold your breath,—each leaf is still—,
And now your pulses madly thrill,
As fierce winds fold you in their arms
And fill your heart with wild alarms.
And when the storm is past, again
You lift your voice in sweet refrain
Of fountains, brooklets, choir and bells—
"Swish-sh-sh!" the chorus swells.

NIGHT-DREAMS

Moonlight upon the waters, all the world is silent,
Bathed with its glory, flooded with its light,
Shadowy and soft, soft-gliding are those moonbeams,
Creeping up o'er the sands like phantoms glinting white.
Stealthily and slowly, mysteriously and ghostlike,
Gliding over the waves, then floating among the clouds;
Witchlike, and willful, minding me of youth-dreams,
That caroled bridal wreaths, then chanted funeral shrouds.

NIGHT-DREAMS

Oh, sprite-like moonbeams, silent lay one instant
Quivering upon the gray sands ere ye noiseless turn and flee,
Like a bright day-dream aroused and frightened
By earth's stern dawnbreaks and life's grim mystery.
Fain would I clasp ye, oh moonbeams to my bosom
Could your white light but penetrate the chill
Of my gray world clouded o'er with shadows,
Peopled with dead hopes lying pale and still.

IN MEMORIAM

Written upon the death of Dr. Jean Frederic Loba

Fold the pale hands above the silent heart
His work on earth is done, his sun hath set.
Be glad he is at rest, nor let the vain tears start.
Look not upon the quiet sleeper with regret.

Mute the white lips, the tongue forever stilled.
No answer comes to us from out the vale so deep,
To love's solicitude. The mighty will
Hath bowed to heaven's decree. Then, wherefore weep?

Closed is the ear alike to love's unquiet voice
And friendship's questionings, for death's sweet peace
Hath set a seal unbreakable on lips and eyes
And struggling soul hath found at last release.

In vain we question yet, amazed, unsatisfied,
Why must he yield his brave, true, patient life
While yet still young—knowing his desire to live
For tender children and for cherished wife.

Stainless and incorruptible, in his strong purity,
Thank God for such grand lives, given though so short a while
For lofty standard of true excellence,
Through many noble years without a stain of guile.

IN MEMORIAM

Shut down the coffin lid, in reverence lay away
This mute, white silence, all his work is done.
The weary nights, the long, slow-marching day
Are overpast. He hath the victory won.

Go thou, brave soul, we cannot fetter thee;
Soar thou above life's chains and grim death's mystery.
For thou hast conquered every earthly wish
And left behind thee hallowed memory.

THE CALL

Hark! What is that cuts the shining air
Like a sword in the hand of fate?
Vibrant and clear as a doomsday bell,—
Compelling and grim as hate?
Up from the South to the cold Northland,
Forth from the East to the West,—
Borne from the vales to the mountaintops,
A call for the country's Best!

Who are they in the tramping host
Who march to the trumpet's call?
Who are the brave-eyed and fearless ones?
On whom shall the honors fall?
They are those of the gripping hand,
The valiant and strong of soul.
They are the best of the waiting land,
Upspringing to win the goal!

You who slink in your craven fear
Your shriveled life to save,
Down on your knees to the gleaming band
And creep out of sight to your grave!
Mayhap some glint from their shining eyes
May light up your coward soul.
You may arise to loftier heights
Where the pitying gods control.

THE CALL

But if you fall where the dead dog lies
In the slime of the blood-rank clay,
Will your soul struggle up to the gleaming band
Who march in the war-bright way?
Or will you crawl in the craven's path
And hide your face from the sun
Lest yon banner sheds its radiant light
On the shame of your mother's son!

FRIENDSHIP

Dedicated to Millie Berger

It is a little word, round which fond memory lingers
That sends the warm blood bounding, and makes the pulses leap,
The tracing of this simple word by warm, magnetic fingers
Gives us a sign and token of love to hold and keep.

It fills our days with gladness and makes the world seem brighter
It shines upon our pathway from out life's murky sky,
It gives to toil a pleasure, and makes each burden lighter
And leaves kind recollections of friends that never die.

In rustic gown and kirtle the milkmaid is an empress,
The king is less a monarch than humblest peasant-boy,
Unless this rarest jewel is treasured at its value
Where ages cannot tarnish and rust can ne'er destroy.

It makes the voice more gentle, the eye with kindness gleaming,—
The smile must be alluring, for friendship is so rare,—
The hand-clasp warm and tender and true, not idly seeming,
And wrapped within its influence the world seems bright and fair.

PERHAPS

If I were to live my life all over,
Could have my choice of good or ill;
Could see the world beneath my feet;
Could bend its subjects to my will;
Could order morning, noon and night
With just so much of sun and shade
As suited me; Could I have each wish
Gratified ere the wish was made;
I wonder, could I be given to choose
My great desire, should I gain or lose?
Perhaps.

If I were cast on a desert island,
Or out in a storm-driven, wind-tossed boat;
The rudder useless, the oars all broken;
Helpless, alone, on the sea afloat;
Or, if I were lost in a thick-grown forest,
With the dread, black night coming on apace.
Beset by the terrors of the jungle,
Could I look my danger in the face
And choose aright—if 'twas shown to me
The safest road by which to flee?
Perhaps.

If upon this page two shapely hands
Were laid before my waiting eyes;—
One grasped the sword for honor's sake,
One sought to scale the glowing skies
In search of fame by magic pen
Dipped in hot wells of eloquence
By truth inspired, Oh, think you then
I should lose my crown through ignorance?
Ah, should I doubt, the how, or when
To make my choice 'twixt sword and pen?
Perhaps!

HUMILITY

How weak we are! How vain our boasted strength!
How puerile our small wills! How short the length
Of our full time—man's God-alloted space!
How full of nothingness at most is man!

It is this nothingness which maketh us go wrong.
This weak servility where most we should be strong,
And sin-defying at whatever cost;—
Counting for heaven gained the world well lost.

THE MAGDALENE

This Way Madness Lies

Alone, the hour is midnight, all alone!
With my life's checkered pages turned to read
For company. Yet I make no moan
Though as I turn each page my heart may bleed.

Alone, yet round me seem to flit white, ghostly forms,
Spirits it may be, of the unquiet dead
Who, knowing my deep woe, my life's great need
Drop their cold, silent tears upon my stricken head.

Alone the broad, full moon shines calm, serene
From out the great, sweet heavens, bending low
Down even to the depths of my despair.
Oh, moon! oh calm sweet heavens, why shine ye so!

Oh, all things beautiful and bright and fair,
Ye mock me in my hours of woe, my wretchedness!
Oh, for sweet pity's sake shut out from me
Your mocking brightness, your pure loveliness!

A MYSTERY

I've tried to sound the depths of oceans vast,
I've sought to read the mysterious scroll of Heaven.
I find a joy in questioning the past.
To mountains sky-clipped tops in pain I've striven.
Before my searching eyes lie broad and fair
The many-acred fields,—my neighbor's wealth.
Beyond the everlasting sunkissed hills.
About me shadows creep with noiseless stealth.
Mountain and sky, hill, field, and smiling sea—
All, all are full of voiceless mystery.

Within the throbbing, living part of me, the mite
That men call heart, there lurks a subtle pain,
A wish intense, to read the book of life.
Page after page I turn, but all is useless, vain.
I look up to the heavens: they still smile coldly down.
In vain I stretch my hands out to the rolling sea.
The expansive fields are speechless, brown and lone.
The mountain tops are far too high to see.

I ask old Father Time to unfurl the map of life
That I may see and read. The old man's deaf, I ween!
I ask kind Mother Nature, but with mystic eye
And finger on shut lip she, silent, smiles serene.

A mound lies at my feet,—fresh, newturned mould,—
Long, wide, and deep a monarch scarce could fill.
With burning eyes turned skyward point I to the shape,—
With cold, white finger questioning. But still
The same despairful muteness from both sky and mould.
My heart is hot! but sky and earth are cold.

In agony of irrefutable wish I cry
Out to the voices of the night profound,—
Tell me what sing ye in your tuneless song?
A mocking laugh, a sigh, a wordless sound.
Tell me what means this silence 'tween this mould and me?
Only the mould gives answer,—Mystery!

TWO HISTORIES

A ship went over the bounding tides—
  I ho! for the stately thing!
The waves rose softly and lapped her sides
  With a gleeful fling.
A bride smiled bravely through scorching tears,—
"He will be back in two short years!
He has given his word; I will have no fears."
  And she kissed her ring.

A black gloom settled on land and sea,—
  The ship bent her prow.
The waves washed over her misery—
  What matters it now!
Two years—and a wife looks up at the clock,—
"My boy, we must hasten down to the dock."
A black hull rots on a venomous rock.
  Ah the unkept vow!

SECOND HISTORY

A long blue line moving step-by-step—
  Beat the drums! blow the fife!
Halt! break ranks! With a rush go the hurrying feet!
  "This is life, joy in life!"
A blue-clad boy with a girlish face,
A whitefaced girl with a stern, gray eye.
"I'm coming back when the war is done;
  Farewell" and she said "Goodbye."

Two armies drawn up in grip of death,—
  "Boom the guns! Strike the steel!"
A crimson doublet with gasping breath!—
  "Let the war-cry peal!"
Two shadows fall by a running tide,
One, a marble image with icy breath,
One, a whitefaced girl with a stern, gray eye,
  Talking coldly of death.

SECOND HISTORY

Two heads bent low on a chancel rail,—
  Ring the bells! Peal the bells!
And down where the bullets fall like hail,
  Hark the knells, parting knells!
Four years and a day, and the victory is won
For the blue-clad line coming step-by-step.
She lifts her head. He is England's son!
  What matters the vow unkept?

THE PASSING SUMMER

What is it I hear in the distance
So like a passing sigh?
What hushes the birds in the forests?
Why do bright flowers die?
Why do the velvety billows
Of grass that was wont to wave
In the wind grow brown and heavy
Like the turf on a pauper's grave?

Icily stern comes the answer
Of winds that are laden with chill,—
"Child of the tropics why murmur?
Your beautiful summer is still
And cold and rigid as marble;
Blue-lipped and voiceless now
The dews are thick and heavy
On the erstwhile glowing brow."

"How when you soothed and cheered me
With the warmth of your glorious smile,—
How should I know, dear Summer
You were fading and dying the while?
Plaintive and sad sighs the north wind,—
You plead for the summer in vain!"
But I throw myself on her coffin
And sob out regretful pain.

THE PASSING SUMMER

Yea, past and gone is the summer,
Glowing and bright for a while;
Hushing each sense with its restfulness,
Fair as a maiden's smile.
Dear, beautiful, faded Summer
Never so fair as now,
I bind the frosts of Autumn
About your pallid brow.

TIRED OUT

Over mine eyelids a weariness creeps—
Oh, to be young and to smile again!
While o'er my senses a stern mentor keeps
Vigils my moods to beguile again.
Care is a demon, I yawned, full of spite.
Oh to be quiet and sleep again!
Fame is delusive and subject to flight,
O'er which we smile—then we weep again.

Life is haphazard and nothing is real
Oh, to be null nor to live again!
Dead to ambition; unable to feel,
Pinpricks to take nor to give again.
Steeping my heart in its bitterest gall,—
Oh, but to rest and forget again!
Hope nothing, want nothing, have no beliefs.
Believing is but to regret again.

ONE DAY
An Allegory

I am sitting alone in my study, the clock in the distant tower,
Has just rung out with measured clang the midnight's changeful hour,
When the life of the day now folded away in a memory of the past,
For her heart has broken its tender chords in a struggle that could not last.

ONE DAY
An Allegory

The sweet, bright day! how fair her face only this very morn,
I cannot think a happier smile could ever a face adorn.
When but half awake I opened my eyes to catch her warm caress,
She kissed with her smiling lips my soul into forgetfulness.

They saw her kiss on my fevered lips, I felt the kiss in my soul,
Waking, I cried, Oh for this one day to be mine! the whole
Of this one day that smiles so bright; this day is my destiny,
And whether she bringeth good or ill, it matters not to me.

'Neath the wildering fascinations of her kisses in my heart
I yet could hear a warning voice ask,—"Wilt accept a part
Of the issues of this phanton—illusive, witching sprite"
And I said "I will accept them though their brightness turn to blight."

And the day grew bright, and brighter and brightest, till at noon
My soul, so full of the glory of her smile was like to swoon;
But as I feasted my eyes on her loveliness and grace
I saw a remorseless shadow steal silently over her face.

Over the fair, bewitching face that had been so dear to me
I saw a remorseless shadow steal grimly and noiselessly,
Nor pause in its baneful journey till its ruthless work was done
And I saw by the wreck and carnage that my day's fleet race was run.

And they came to me in my agony and said, "You loved her so,
You best of all can fold her hands over her breast of snow.
Your hands will far more tenderly close down o'er the rayless eyes
The lids grown weary with tears and ache for the earth's deceitful lies."

And they stole away from the lifeless clay, and left me alone with my dead,
Left me alone with the casket pale from which all life had fled

ONE DAY
An Allegory

Left me alone, alone, in that grim, death-haunted room.
Alone, to be chilled and stifled by the phantoms mid the gloom.

Sick with the changes wrought since the first glad flush of morn
I said, "For the sake of those few sweet hours with love I will adorn
This beautiful, lifeless day of mine; this dull, soulless mystery
Giving back measure for measure for the joy that she promised me."

And the tangled masses of golden hair I parted over the brows
Of marble white: their pain was done. Fond love's bewildering vows
Awaked no more the dumb, hushed ear. The eyes forever closed
To lovelit glance, or darksome frown, or burden self-imposed.

The weary hands so silent, unresponsive to my touch,—
Oh, if those hands would grasp! or move, or warm; would give this much
To me as small assurance of faith, in death's mystery,
That through all life's incompleteness she had meant to do well by me!

But only the small pale fingers could I fold above the heart
So throbless now,—Back, back ye tears nor unavailing, start!
The dumb, white silence dressed at last and all my very own
Is full of sentient eloquence. At last I am not alone.

I sit me down by the patient dead, and we talk of the vanished hours,
And her pale lips smile approval as I place some tear-wet flowers—
Late roses, upon her quiet heart. Their fragrance fills the room
Of my lily dead. With one farewell to my day I leave the room.

ONE DAY
An Allegory

And the dear. dead day I have laid away. And I seem to be full
of the glow
Of this fruitless life as issueless, to me as cold as snow.
But I think as I hear men measure their lives by years in the
usual way,
They may measure their lives by years,—I measure mine by
one day.

A VISION

If I should die tonight, by God's sweet grace
My spirit would rise hope-borne to the heights
On pinions glistening white. Would see His face.
Rapturous, expectant, faith-poised mid the lights
Of gleaming wings, and softly fluttering robes,
And beckoning hands, my soul, enthralled
By promise of sweet rest beyond the globes
Of mortal vision would respond if I am called.

I do not long to leave this dear, old world
So full of bright, alluring smiles and friendly eyes;
So full of vivid interests that thrall my soul;
So full of joy in life, so bound by friendship's ties.
Life is too short to waste, too sweet to yield
To the grim sicklebearer: let him go his way.
I have no time to barter with his price
Upon my head. If he must 'make it pay,

Let some one else be forfeit. I've no time
To traffic with his terms. He thinks to cow me
By threats of pain, disease, and disappointments, grief,
I have full share of all and yet I see
The bright sun rise by day, the stars by night.
The earth is just as green under the ice and snow;
The birds sing in their time: they know me well,
And they would miss me if I'm called to go.

A VISION

My work is yet half done, so many tasks remain
That twice man's full allotment of the busy years
Will scarce see them completed. Though with full might
I fill each flying hour, I still am in arrears.
Yet I will do His will if I am 'mong the 'called'
Even that unpleasant task I will not fail nor shirk.
But, 'till the sickle-bearer whets his sythe'
I will be heedless of his threats! And, now, to work!

LONG AGO

Long ago I stood upon a wave-washed, rock-ribbed shore
And watched the billows coming and going forevermore;
Coming and going as if messengers in imperious need,
Unquestioned and unquestioning in unvarying speed.

And I thought as I listned awefilled, to the lap of the hungry sea
As if hurrying wave upon wave in mad haste with a message for me;
Am I unconsciously standing within the wave-washed ring,
Holding out beckoning hands unto the pallid sea-king?

Am I so weary of life,—grant that 'tis all a commotion,—
Weary of high, dry land that I should fly to the ocean,
Holding out eager hands to merciless, cold-lipped Death
As he sits in his chariot freezing the crests with his icy breath?

Oh Sea, you cannot affright me; I fain would flee to your stronghold,
For the earth is full of the terrors that drive men mad.
Come, fill mine eyes with your spray, close my lids hot with weeping,
Let me rest in your wave-rocked cradle, and, resting, I shall be glad!

BATTLE IN HEAVEN

Part First

Far as the earth doth stretch 'tis night, all night.
Out on the swelling, stormy, raging deep
From shore to shore. Grim night hath spread a pall
O'er all the land. Her sentry's measured beat
Cuts the thick air in darkness deep, profound.
O, awful, subtle, black, impenetrable night!
O, sunless, starless, moonless, deathlike gloom!
O, dark Sahara of the mind and soul!
O, fettered, prisoned life, famished and scorched
With fires compared to which hell's seething glows
Are cold and colorless, a mockery pitiful!
O, endless night! O sunless life! O sword
Ruthless and keen in hand of sentry stern!
O, dread Sahara of the mind and soul!

Part Second

"O, dread hour of parting! O, God! turn this earth
Back, back upon its axis! Roll back this great globe,
Thou art infinite, mighty, to help bear the parting!
O, make today yesterday, just for one hour
Ere this parting eternal! O, God, turn this universe
Back for one hour! Then Lord, if Thou'rt God,
Give infinite strength to help bear the parting!"

O, vain spirit pleadings! O, womanish dread
Of a merited sorrow, for Love when he comes
In the night like an outlaw, must suffer the curse
Of Jehovah offended, in death everlasting!
Vain, womanish prayer! The moments are speeding
As though they are demon-pursued to inherald
The near hour of parting, the heart-stab most exquisite!
Hands clasp in a grip as with sinews of heartstrings;
Eyes meet for a soul-searching look for a lifetime
Forever and ever to keep in fond memory;
Lip that hath sought lip in love's hungry beggary

BATTLE IN HEAVEN
Part Second

Meet in a heart-famished kiss that shall live
A whole life to comfort. Keen is the ear
To hear the loved voice even though it must whisper
A knell-like farewell to an agonized listener.

Out through the doorway regardless of sorrow-filled
Look of entreaty, endearment, deep, passionate.
Out through the hallway, unmindful of tempestlike
Grief-overwhelming: of coming catastrophe.
Over the threshold the strong step is passing;
On down the walk, on, on through the gateway
The swift step is bearing him ever beyond her
Fond loving arms clasping. On, on in the silence
Of distance immeasured, unmindful of consequence,
To duty obedient. On ring the footfalls, on, on out of hearing,
And leave her stretched prone on the floor: in grief's agony
Sunk in a death-faint,—unconsciousness merciful.

Where is the strong arm that should have upborne her
In tenderest sympathy? Where the kind eyes that should
Light the dulled intellect out of oblivion?
Where the dear voice whose echoes could waken
The soul out of bondage? And where the warm kiss
That could thaw Death's cold fingers entwined 'mong her
heart strings?
Gone, in the distance of sorrowful parting of duty implacable.

Part Third

Tell me, is it Springtime? Is that the sweet bird-call
I hear in the maples? That the rustle of poplars?
Is yon the deep dark'ning of young garden cedars?
Is that the faint odor of young spicy pine trees?
And are those the cherry trees budding to blossom?
O, is it the springtime? (or only a phantom
Of something to mock me, so hopeful, so mad'ning)
And is yon the glimmer of daydawn and sunrise
(Or is it the flush of a brain-burning fever)?
Oft comes the query from pale lips and tremulous.

BATTLE IN HEAVEN
Part Third

Tired and aimless the vague glance of questioning;
Feeble the hold of the pale fingers wandering
Over the counterpane searching for answers.
Done unto madness! O, keen senses smothered
In pitiful darkness of fever consuming!
O, soul-fire supernal, burn low on the altars
Of darkness most merciful! O, quivering heartstrings,
Quiescent, unanswering in silence so deathlike!
Vibrative, responsive no more to the music
Of earth's sweetest melodies, low-voiced, seductive.
O, spirit-strife quelled! O, agony soothed in
The darkness of madness! O, heart burnings muttered
Alone in the ear of wondering attendants
Faithful and trusty! O, waking brain force rest ye
Yet longer and thrive in the merciful darkness
Of slow-waking madness—soul-saving oblivion!

Part Fourth

Loud ring the voices of bright shining angels
O'er a soul's victory, o'er passion's vanquishment.
God sends his ministering throng to watch o'er her—
Bright-winged angels, white-draped, compassionate.
He is more merciful in His stern majesty
Than earth's dear sirens, soft-voiced, seductive.
Yea, God is merciful, lighting but feebly
Dim lamps on the altar of reason deserted.
Tenfold more pitiful, graciously sending
Comforting angels to her soul's deliverance.
Strong-armed angels commissioned to battle with
Mighty temptations that close in about her.
Fire-fiend demons of darkness that meet in a
Mad dance and gleeful o'er her tribulations,
Sink back appalled, in view of the dauntless host,
Bold brows and fearless eyes marshaled to conquer them.

In the cold day-dawn in her heart's Gethsemane
Met the fierce battle throng in a red deathful fight.
Twice did the sun in his rounds rise and set.

BATTLE IN HEAVEN
Part Fourth

Yet fougth the battlethrong, yet fierce the battle raged.
Fainting and dying yet fought the white-robed band,
Cursing and frenzied yet raged the demon host.
Yet fought the battle throng till just as the sun went down
On the fourth day the white-robed conquerers,
Singing a glad song of heavenly hozannas,
Kneeling upon the clouds dyed deep in battle blood,
Over the victory chanting a thankful hymn.
Loud sing the heavenly choir! Glad shouts the angel band
Over the victory gained at such fearful cost.
Thousands o f warriors brave sank in the martyred van
Gladly that one poor soul tired and tempest-tossed
May, to her Father's house come in her innocence
Home with the valorous to Heaven's security.

Back from the contest the vanquished march slowly.
Slow and reluctant with dull fires consuming them.
Turn, swift a backward glance cast at their conquerers.
See they the ransomed one late saved through Heaven's smiles
As she kneels humbly before the throne glistening,
Touching the sceptre extended in majesty.
Gladly, with weak hands a white rose receiving.
Calm browed and radiant, meek in her innocence,
Saved at such fearful cost leaves she sweet Heaven's gate
Not in a transport, but quietly, solemnly.
Leaving the glittering throng and Heaven's security—
Leaving with angel smiles yet bright upon her,
Bearing upon her breast Heaven's fragrant offering.

A PRAYER WITH A NEW MEANING

Dedicated to Burton C. Cook, January, 1885
Speaker in the House with Grant and Colfax

"Our Father," My Father—which are in the heavens to be
I'm glad that my Father is in Heaven: there He is waiting for me.
There He is building a mansion for His storm-driven, tempest-tossed child:
How glad I shall be to be gathered in out of the storm so wild!

A PRAYER WITH A NEW MEANING

"Hallowed be Thy name"—yea, precious above every name:
Sweetest word ever spoken when all other sounds are tame
To one who hath drunk of life's cup to the dregs, and turneth away
To drop on her knees to whisper, "Our Father" and to pray.

"Our Father" My Father! Let thy "Kingdom" come into my soul,
And heal Thou my broken and contrite heart; the whole
Of my wearisome life laid bare to Thine eyes. "Thy will be done
As it is done in Heaven," so I have the victory won.

Our Father "Give us this day our daily portion of bread,"
Meekly, we ask this blessing upon every sinbowed head.
Knowing well that without it famine will enter the soul
Of this Thy lowliest daughter so long under sin's control.

Our Father,—forgive our trespases,—Father forgive, forgive!—
Oh, this boon of forgiveness, Thou, Lord, alone canst give!
The depths of our degredation, Thou hast sounded them deep,—
How many and oft our trespasses Thou didst the long record keep.

"As we forgive those who trespass against us"—Yea, once again
We will whisper that too, for out of our souls is driven the pain
Of bitter resentment for cruelest wrongs long brooded o'er;
May their baneful shadows cross our soul's threshold no more.

"And lead us not into temptation,"—Oh, Father, be pitiful here!
And unto our soul's mightiest pleadings turn Thou not a deaf ear!
For many and strange are the wiles of the tempter and we are so prone
To list to his voice: Oh, leave us not battling alone!

A PRAYER WITH A NEW MEANING

"But deliver us from evil"—Oh we are so tired of sin!
And wrong; Lord, open the door to the heaven that we may
enter in.
Safely kept from all danger, never to totter or fall!
"Deliver us from all evil" Oh, that vast, boundless all!

"Yea, Father, Thine is the glory transcendent. Thine be the
wondrous power,
Forever and ever all Thine. In Thine infinite mercy this hour,
To open the gates celestial, to hold our weak hands, and then
To receive us! and thus will it be forever and ever, Amen!—"

EXTRACT

No life is naught that hath some intent good,
E'en though it sometimes fail in cherished plan.
The hand that built the bark and sent it forth
On life's tempestuous sea, will soon again
Upon some peaceful shore the storm-tossed thing land safe.
If for a time from our tired eyes is lovingly, aye,
Mercifully withheld the cause, why murmur we?
If in His sight it seemeth good to guide us
Mid the deeps, why murmur we? It is not want of strength
Nor cowardice, neither a dumb servility
This bending low our stubborn heads unto the Lord our King
Only a lesson learned which, at the first
Seemed but a cruel punishment all undeserved.
For is there wilful child that does not writhe
And sob and moan and deem himself aggrieved
Because a wise, kind teacher doth impose a task.

THE POWER OF SONG

February, 1882

Dedicated to Eugene Ellery, Baritone Singer in the First Baptist Church, Evanston, Illinois

This morning so heavy of heart,
Soul-sick and weary of care,
I, restless, impatient of pain
Stepped forth in the clear, open air.
The frost-gleaming boughs of the trees—
So leafless, so birdless, so mute
Told a tale of a colorless life
That experience may not refute.

So, musing, I wended my way,
Heeding little, and caring less where.
Till, approaching a steeple-tipped church
I stood on the broad, cold, stone stair.
And many a time and oft,
I have stood in their midst and did eat
Of the bread and did drink of the wine,
Laying all my sad load at His feet.

But today I was sorrowed and grim
With the burdens too heavy to bear.
"But" said I, "I will enter this church
Perhaps I may find quiet there."
So I stood in the house of the Lord
In the wide-opened welcoming door,
And paused on the threshold to list
With quivering lips and heartsore,

For, softly, as if from above
A voice full of rare melody
Full of tenderness, sang of the love
Of a pitying Savior for me.
I listened, the anthem rolled on,
With gracefully quivering plaint
It died softly down to a sigh
Like a passionate soul in restraint.

"Come unto Me," said the voice
As of old in pathos so rare,
"Come unto Me I will give
You rest from your sorrow and care."
"Come unto Me" pleads the Christ,
In my anguish, and pain half forgot,
"Come! I will wear your sharp crown,
My grace shines o'er all; doubt it not."

Forgotten the burden of grief,
Forgotten the hours of pain!
Rolled off from my soul the great load.
My heart caught the tender refrain.
"Come unto Me though your sins
Be as scarlet yet shall they be white!"
" Come unto Me though your griefs
Shut out from your soul heaven's light."

"Come unto Me though your faith
Be shattered by grief and despair:
Come, I will give you sweet peace
Come, I your sorrows will share!
Come!" and the door opened wide
To my soul, and the sunlight streamed in,
Chasing away the dark doubts,
Cleansing my past life of sin.

"Come take my hand; I will lead
You through this dark sea of despair,
Come" and I followed the voice,
And left all my mad anguish there,
Mother, and sister, and friends
Gone to that world free from wrong,
Husband and children thank God;
Thank God for Ellery's song!

MEMORIES OF WARTIME

I am haunted, forms I see
That are seen by none but me.
Dark eyes peering through the gloom
Of the dust-encumbered tomb.
Stately forms and martial tread
Of my well-remembered dead.
Lingering clasp of dying hands,
Voices dear, whose faint commands
Come to me from far-off graves,
Where the green palmetto waves.

And again I hear the call
That aroused them, brothers all.
Roused them every one to arms,
To the battles shrill alarms.
Heroes all! Thank God for this!
And again I seem to kiss
Broad brows that are mouldering now.
Lips that never more may vow
To be faithful, nothing loath.
And again I see them come
Up the lane to our old home:
Three brave brothers, loyal, true
To the cause and army blue.

One, our honored father's pride
Made our guardian when he died.
Father, brother, husband, son,
Friend and hero all in one,
Brother James, our blueeyed Jim
With what pride I think of him!
"Handsome Hill" our mother's joy.
God! can years on years destroy
Or blot out the memory
Of that morn's dumb agony?

Mother, sisters, children too,
All were home to bid adieu

To our loved ones. Try in vain,
To conceal each trace of pain
That comes surging through the heart,—
"Time is flying: we must part!"
Clasp once more the faithful hands;
Take once more love's strong commands;
Look once more in each dim eye,
Time is precious: moments fly.
Kiss once more the lips and cheek.
"Listen all let mother speak!"

Wild-eyed children still and white,
Gazing on in pale affright,
Not a murmur, not a sigh,
Not a tear shall dim the eye,—
All, all listen to each word,
Slowly spoken plainly heard.
Ah, I seem to hear her speak
As the red glow flushed her cheek
And her eye flashed as in youth
With the gleam of pride and truth.

"Boys, I would not keep you now.
You've enlisted: keep your vow,
To be faithful, loyal, true
To the cause, and the army blue.
To your homes, your children, wives.
But if you should save your lives
At the cost of truth and name
Never let me know your shame!
Never let me see the face
Of a son who could disgrace
His fair name, and bow my head.
Better that such son were dead!"

Then the motherlove in might
Blanched her face to ghastly white.
Dimmed her eyes, that, gazing on
Sternset face of each loved son,

Saw, as with prophetic eye
How two of the three must die.
And she came and stood beside
Edward—glorious in his pride.

Spoke— "If you should fall, my son,
Though no laurels you have won,
Never let them strike you low
With your back turned to the foe!"
Kissed the "blue-eyed" turned to Hill.
There the mother-heart stood still.
He the youngest of the three
Sought a comforter to be.
Gazed in silence on his face,
Marked his handsome, boyish grace,
Smoothed the clustering, dusky hair,
From the brow so broad and fair,
Murmured through her unshed tears—,
"But a boy! scare twenty years!"

Hark, a "Call" the clear air stirred—
One low whispered prayer is heard—,
"Father, keep them loyal, true
To their homes and country too.
Comfort them in grief or pain;
Bring them back to me again."
Rose the motherlove in might.
Kissing each loved face so white—,
Left a blessing on each head,—
Out the door with martial tread
For the last time down the lane
Walked two of the three again.
Three walked down the shady lane,
Only one came back again.

'Shiloh' gave us blue-eyed 'Jim'
Wounded, sick, we welcomed him
As we welcome back the dead
When all hopes have wellnigh fled.

And our youngest soldier lay
Fading slow but sure away.
Hopelessly we tried to cheer
Mother, though so very near
Stole the shadow of despair,
Darkening prospects bright and fair.
This was grief without alloy
Waiting for our dying boy.

But ah joy! a letter came,
Telling us in his own name—
"Home on Thursday" this was all
Oh, so dim the feeble scrawl!
Ah the joyous days when we
Sought that everything should be
Just as Hillman liked them best,
While he stayed at home to rest.

Gladder faces on that morn
Never did a home adorn.
Ringing laugh and merry song
Cheered the hearthside all day long.
But on one dear face so white
Dwelt a look as though the night
Of despair had hovered low.
Wrapping her in awful woe.
Could she see with vision clear
That the angel Death came near,
Poised his pinions 'bove her door
As though waiting for one more?
Was he waiting to destroy
Hopes that centered round her boy?

But the feast was spread for him,
And the twilight flickered dim.
And we watched the fading day.
And our laughter died away
As from window, gate and door
Watched we for our boy once more.

MEMORIES OF WARTIME

Ho! Hill's coming up the lane!
Rang from lip to lip again.
No! the ringing shout grew still,—
That is not our brother Hill,
For he stands beside the gate waiting,
Why should brother wait?
And the stranger beckoned me,
Half afraid, I went to see,—
Giving me a letter said,—
"Child, I fear your brother's dead!"
Ah! that black-sealed letter bore
Sad news through the crowded door.

Patiently he suffered all
In a southern hospital.
Till on Monday just at eight,
Passed he through the shining gate.
"Mother, Home and Friends" he said
Then our soldier boy was dead.

Not a murmur, not a word,
From his lips was ever heard.
Tired feet and nerveless hands
Soon must lose life's feeble bands.
When the fever scorched and burned
Then his eyes oft homeward turned.
Vain he begged once more to come
Just to see the dear old home.
When death glazed his dark eyes dim,
There were none to comfort him.
Granted was his last request
All too late; he was at rest.
Cared for by no kindred ties,
Strangers closed his dying eyes.
Clasped hands o'er the still heart true;
Wrapped him in the soldier blue;
Laid him 'mong the soldier dead.
So the black-sealed letter said.

But the awful days of pain
When we hoped and feared again:
Days of anguish, mute, intense,
Sleepless nights of blank suspense,
Were, when Corinth's fields were red
With the blood her heroes shed.

Came a message o'er the wires,—
"E'er another day expires
We shall meet to dare and die,
At Corinth: Dear friends, goodbye!"

Oh, the awful hours of grief!
Morning brought us no relief.
Mad'ning hours of that dark day
Drifted one by one away.
But when set the glowing sun
Corinth's battlefield was won!

And again the night o'er all
Flung her mantle like a pall.
In our hearts a darker night
Waiting news of that mad fight.
Where was he, our Edward brave?
Lying in a soldier's grave?
Sick, or wounded, in the camp?
In a prison cold and damp?
Oh, the torturing hopes and fears!
Grief too keen for moans and tears.
In our hearts a colder gloom
Than the chill of shroud and tomb.

Silent stole away the night;
Dawned with awe the morning light.
And again another day
Sadly wore our hopes away;
Watching, waiting white with pain
Till the sun had set again.

MEMORIES OF WARTIME

As the last rays of the light
Ushered in another night,—
In our hearts foreboding pain,—
When so slowly up the lane
Rode a messenger to tell
How he fought, and how he fell!

'Twas a cruel, coward blow
Laid my brave young brother low!
For they sent him round a hill
With twelve men to meet the foe
Of five thousand rebel guns.
Eight of those devoted sons
Fell. And 'mong them first of all
First to meet and first to fall
Tall of form and clear of eye,
Sergeant Edward dared to die!

Twelve men gainst five thousand! Shame!
Corinth shudders at the name
Of the fiend whose coward breath
Could thus send to fruitless death!
When the fatal order came
Sergeant Edward heard his name,—
Passed an instant "My brave men!"
Knowing well that ne'er again
Would they see the morning light
Should he lead them round that height.
Not for self the true heart yearned
As his face he backward turned
To the faithful, trusty few:
Just twelve men in army blue.
Could twelve men o'ercome the host
Of five thousands? At his post
Each man ready to obey.
"Lead on Sergeant!" so they say.
Ten brief seconds: time flies fast
Since the order came. At last

Spoke again the coward knave,
Seeking his own life to save,—
"Go! you coward, go!"
("Meet yon sure, death-dealing foe!")

High above the cannon's peal,
High above the clashing steel,
'Bove the shrieks and dying wail
As the bullets flew like hail,
'Bove the screams of maddened horse
Plunging o'er the bleeding corse
Of his rider, high o'er all
As their comrades round them fall,
Rings the shout to boys in blue,—
"Forward boys! I'm going too!"

Onward rushed those few doomed men.
Cease, my brain, and pause my pen,
While my lips with awful might
Stifle curses black as night!
Curses can avail him naught!
Mother's prayers are all forgot.
Tears of wife and children vain.
Never did he speak again.
There they found him cold and dead,
There he fell shot through the head,
Found him lying still and white
At the end of that mad fight.
Ah, the glory of his face!
Fearless eye and manly grace,
Six feet three high 'bove them all—
Glorious mark for trait'rous ball!
Hands grip still the bayonet;
Rigid face and lips sternset;
Found him lying white and low,
But with face turned to the foe!

MEMORIES OF WARTIME

Long, long years have passed since we
Suffered that white agony.
But I seem to hear their calls
In the dear familiar halls.
Seem to hear the martial tread
Of my sacred, martyred dead.
But I bow my head in pain
Knowing well that ne'er again
As I linger by the door
Will I greet my heroes more.

A PRAYER

"Lead Me Not Into Temptation"

Father, reach down Thy all-upholding arm
For I am weak and faint and worn
With spirit-strife. Shield me from harm.
By the sharp thorns my feet are torn.
My hands are pierced by rose-briars,—Ah, dear rose!
Mine eyes ache with the glare of burning sands
On glistening shores which promised sweet repose
To faithful feet and patient, loving hands.
Oh, fair, false rose! Sands, glistening false as fair!
Thou who didst stretch that shore, didst paint the rose,
Didst Thou forsee the certain destiny
That brought me to the shore, the rose to me?

THE UNDERTONE

Hark! how it breaks on the listening ear,
A long, low, sobbing, passionate wail,
Seeming to fall from the soft blue skies,
Seeming to rise from the southern swale.
Filling the clouds of the far away heavens
In mournful tumult the sad sound heaves
Long and low, yet its force hath riven
The land,—like a heart that grieves.

THE UNDERTONE

Up from the chasms pale hands stretch forth,
Sabreless, musketless, work all done.
Forth from the trenches pale faces gleam
Bright and eager o'er victories won.
O my hereos! my brothers three!
Proud and eager ye were to fight
And die, if the need of the hour should will
For this land and the Cause and Right!

Can I forget that Shiloh gave back
Only the wrecks of my Bravest and Best?
Can I forget that fearful charge
With Prentice down in the Hornet's Nest?
Can I forget though the years be long
And many the faces that rise between
That siege at Corinth, his new-made grave
And that hour of anguish keen?

Yea, wreathe the graves of our hero-dead
With roses red and lilies pale;
The gentle act doth a peace-draught shed
O'er the turbulent southern swale.
And the cold north-land is warmed and bright
For the red rose breath from your gentle hands;
And the lily heart sends its sweet perfume
Over all this grateful land.

But spite of this act of a country's love,
Though the camp-fires burn in our aching hearts;
Brave eyes are dimmed, and brows are lined
Like a nation's rough-hewn charts.
Though the breath of the flowers stifle sense
For a time, yet all things fail.
And the love of the nation cannot hush
That sad, heart-breaking wail!

QUESTION

What in the afterworld lieth in store for me?
What have I gained by the battles of this?
What will the welcome be? Who'll open the door for me?
How shall I use what is offered of bliss?
What shall my answer be if by heaven's charity
I am permitted to enter and share
In Christ's sweet love for us; in angels pleas for us.
Love sweet, plea strong beyond all compare!

SAILING

I stood upon the deck
  Of an out-bound, dancing ship,
And watched with glistening eye
  As with many a buoyant skip
She tossed upon the crests
  Of the big inrolling seas
And many a shout and laugh rang out
  On the joy-filled ocean breeze.

Chorus

Merrily sail, merrily sail, merrily all the day!
With heart so light, till morning bright,
We will drive all cares away.

All day o'er the flashing waves,
  With never a thought of ill,
We laughed at former fears,
  And had our own sweet will,
As we cleared the spacious deck
  For a merry old-time play,
Like a careless band of children we
  Had a merry children's day.

SAILING

Chorus

Merrily sail, merrily sail, merrily all the day!
With heart so light, till morning bright,
We will drive all cares away.

Oh, a life on the rolling deep
  Is free from landstorm strife
Where the white caps dance in joy
  Man is master of his life.
Like an eagle poised in air
  Where he finds his welcome home
He may fling a laugh at the world's dull care
  And over the oceans roam.

Chorus

Merrily sail, merrily sail, merrily all the day!
With heart so light, till morning bright,
We will drive all cares away.

SACRED TO MY SISTER

Only a little gift, perhaps, treasured with utmost care,
Hidden away from curious eyes, this timeworn gift so rare.
Only a bit of ivory, that worlds could never buy,
Faded and dim is the face theron, but loved for the long gone by
But loved for the long gone by.

Only a few old letters, yellowed and worn with years,
Read o'er and o'er with aching heart, and fond eyes dimmed with tears,
Only a clustering auburn curl perfumed with roseleaves fair;
See how it coils with clinging swirl, this loving tress of hair!
Clasp close these loves to my bosom and passionately kiss them in pain
Then hide them away from curious eyes and back to life's work again.

SACRED TO MY SISTER

Gently and tenderly I touch this tress of auburn hair
Gently and tenderly, lest the dead be unquiet in her grave.
And sob with pain. I will not e'en allow the winds to blow
Too harshly on the ivory dim that pictures her dear face.

SILVER AND GOLD

"Silver and gold! See, mama, See!
The shining beauties are all for me!"
Laughed a tiny maid "And every one
Of these pretty things shines like the sun!"
And she sang and danced in childish glee.
Her heart was full of the melody
Of babyland. But her eyes so bright
Reflected the dazzling, Circe light
Of silver and gold.

"Silver and gold! Ah well, ah me!
I'm glad to be rich is my destiny.
I'll buy bright gems for my shining hair;
A necklace of diamonds for throat so fair.
Pearls and diamonds with marriage vows,
But only rubies shall deck my brows,
For gold can buy even destiny.
Ah, royal robes and rubies for me!
Bought with silver and gold!"

Silver and gold! my lady fair
Must have bright gems for her shining hair.
I have none, but in this vault
Are silver and gold. I will not halt
'Twixt doubt and fear or conscience's voice.
She must have gems,"—he said, "and here
Are her father's silver and gold."

"Silver and gold! my beauties bright!
One, two, three millions with yellow light
Dazzling my eyes as I count them o'er
As I've counted them many times before.

SILVER AND GOLD

Ha! ha! I'm rich! I have wealth untold.
Who gets my gold must be over bold!''
A stealthy step, a gleam a groan,
And the old man lay on the floor of stone,
Slain for his silver and gold.

''Silver and gold'' mused the rich man's wife
''Have not brought sunlight into my life.
''I've fed the hungry, clothed the poor;
I've turned no outcast from my door;
I've broken no father's heart with shame,
I've brought but pride to my husband's name.
True, I've laid no treasures up in heaven,
And I dare not ask to be forgiven
While I've millions of silver and gold.''

''Some money to buy a loaf of bread,
My mother's very sick'' she said;
And tears were dropping from eyes of blue
While trembled the lips of rosy hue,
As her sweet, young face turned bright and fair
To her father, the haughty millionaire.
''She has no papa, I'll give her mine''
Mused the child while her eyes had a look divine,
''And I'll give her silver and gold.''

Down through the slums of a narrow street,
Threading her way with brave, quick feet,
A fair, young girl passed where pain and want
Had reigned supreme; where crime had its haunt
And held high carnival; where the poor
She heard and saw. The quick tears filled
Her eyes. Her heart with pity thrilled,
And she gave her silver and gold.

Forth from the halls of wealth and fame
A brave heart passed on in Jesus' name.
''I cannot resist the pleading call
Of these hungry souls. I will give them all;

SILVER AND GOLD

My life, my strength is theirs,'' he said.
Men heaped reproaches upon his head.
Fame, kindred, friends were cast aside.
''Oh, Lord, I bring ye all'' he cried.
''And this, Thy silver and gold!''

A sweet, fair, tender, glowing face,
A winning smile, full of Christian grace,
A gentle step, a soothing hand,
A kind, firm voice born to command.
No rustle of her quiet dress
Where want and crime, pain and distress
Were known, so still the path she trod
Of righteousness that blest of God
Were her gifts of silver and gold.

''I'm three score years and ten'' he smiled
In gentle tones like a peaceful child
He laid him down at the close of day
To rest. The night's succeeding sway
Calmed all the world. He awoke at dawn.
They knew the angels were putting on
His angel robes. ''I'm rich'' he said
''Though I've not where to lay my head,
And I've no silver or gold.''

A vast assemblage passed along
The shining streets. An anxious throng
Surged through the jasper gates of heaven
Waiting to be condemned or forgiven.
And one by one each hopeful face
Took on a new celestial grace
Or, doomed to everlasting woe
Was bade forth from God's presence go.

A frown o'erspread the Judge's face.
''Who dared blot out, who dared efface
My seal on a baby's pure, white soul?
Who gave her gold to keep and control

Must pay the price on a sin-bowed head—
Doomed with the doomed! pass out'' He said.

Pitiless still as He turned to scan
the bejeweled maid and the wildeyed man,
Both young, both bought by the gleam of gold.
Their sins, their doom, He sternly told.
''She tempted me'' the white youth pled.
''I am the judge: upon your head
Your crimes. She must bear her share
Of the reward. Her face so fair
Might have drawn thousands up to heaven
She led them down. She is unforgiven.''

Next, a silk-clad dame of high degree
Bowed low at the feet of His Majesty.
''You give unmindful, for fashion's sake.
You never bind up the hearts that break
Upon the cold, sharp, pitiless rocks
Of charity such as yours. My flocks
I bade you feed. With careless grace
You toss your gold in each wan, white face.
Begone! Such charity bringeth woe.
Doomed with the doomed! Pass on below!''

An old man tottered in to stand
Before his judge. With trembling hand
He pointed to a daggerthrust
Above his heart. He had put great trust
In his cruel death,—''By a dagger slain
For his gold!—he whined—''You plead in vain!
Naught of this world's great wealth is thine,
Old man: that silver and gold were mine,
But lent to you to use for those
Whose need should be relieved: whose woes
Gold could assuage. You kept my gold.
You've added crime to the list half told.

You placed temptation in the way
Of one who was too weak to stay
His murderous hand. Your race is run.
Your doom is sealed. Begone! Begone!''

A change came o'er the Judge's face.
He said, with smile so full of grace,
''Of such as these my house is filled,—
This sweet, bright child, who, angel-willed,
Gave bread and gold with generous heart;
Gave of her father's love a part;
Gave gentle pity; freely gave
That which the hungry heart doth crave
Above all things, a friendship pure,
As her young life. Such gifts endure.
Of such as these is my kingdom blest!''
And He laid the child in His dear Son's breast.

A modest, winsome, girlish face,
A tender eye, a form of grace,
Came next and knelt before the throne,
Unconscious, innocent, pure, alone.
''What hast thou done in thy eighteen years
To be forgiven? Thou hast brought no tears
To a mother's eyes. Pride has no hold
On thy young heart. Thy voice is bold
Only to speak in defense of right—
To overcome sin's withering blight.
Thou didst go amidst the coarse and vile,
Well didst thou keep thy heart from guile.
Thy garments spotless, thy young soul white,—
Of such as ye are my heavens bright!''

''My kingdom reigns from shore to shore.
This youth shall reign in it evermore.
Fame, friendship, pleasure and fortune's smiles
Have cast in vain their siren wiles
To tempt him from the toilsome way,

To give his gold, to work and pray;
To tell the gospel I gave to ye;
All that he had he gave to me.
Nor cast one glance at the backward shore.
He shall reign in my kingdom forevermore.

The fair-faced dame knelt by the side
Of the weak old man who in rapture cried
At sight of the Master's glorious face.
"My past misdeeds, my brokenness
Master forgive! but do not love me less!"
The dear Lord smiled, and bade them come
To dwell for aye in that long-sought Home.

A silence fills the awful hour.
The heavens grow dark with mystic power.
Weird shadows fall round the great, white throne.
Father and Son now stand alone.
Father and Son, but yonder stand
In waiting sorrow the angel band.
Silent the harps, sad, sad each face,
Sad, sad and mournful grows the place,
For 'mong the shadows almost unseen
Crouches low at His feet the magdalene.

"Father, forgive! she hath traveled far.
Her feet are worn and many a scar
Maims her poor hands. The burning day
Was long and tedious. She hath been away
From her father's house. She hath naught to wear
But this scarlet robe. Crime, sin, despair,
Hath clothed her thus. She once was fair
As yon angel-band. She once was pure
As the light of heaven. All truths endure.
A mother's love once blessed her head,
For her a mother's tears were shed,
Then o'er her life fell in wanton glee
The blight of sin through man's treachery!

Father forgive, and clothe her anew;
Moisten her lips with Heaven's dew.
Cleanse her anew in baptismal grace;
Erase the shame from her pallid face.
Oh give her hope! Father forgive,
And among the ransomed let her live!
She hath no gold: I paid the debt;
I gave my life, Thou wilt not forget!
Father forgive! For such as she
I gave my life on Calvery!"

O grand defense! O pleading voice!
O tender eyes, ye leave no choice!
All barriers into naught ye break.
"My Son I do this for Thy sake
That not in vain the agony
Of that dark hour on Calvery.
For Thou my Son, didst come between
Death and the outcast magdalene.
Daughter arise: thou art forgiven.
The price is paid: thou canst dwell in heaven.
Put on thy robe of spotless white.
Arise, and come ye into light."

Loud sang the sweet-voiced angel choir!
The glittering harps, the golden lyre
Blent in one ringing symphony
Over the judgment victory.
Greater their joy over this one soul,
This broken life redeemed, made whole,
Than all the spotless throng of Heaven
Who had no sins to be forgiven.

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